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Lawrence University

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Lawrence Honoring Seven Alumni for Career Achievement, Service to the College

Posted on: June 12th, 2013 by Rick Peterson

When Hurricane Sandy pummeled the East Coast last October, some of the homes destroyed by its might included the music students of Javier Arau. Using his musical talents and connections, Arau helped raise thousands of dollars to help his students' families rebuild.



Javier Arau '98

The 1998 Lawrence University graduate and award-winning musician will be one of seven alumni recognized by their alma mater for career achievements, contributions to the betterment of society or volunteer service to Lawrence June 14-16 during the college's annual Reunion Weekend Celebration. The awards will be presented Saturday, June 15 at the Reunion Convocation at 10:30 a.m. in the Lawrence Memorial Chapel. The event is free and open to the public.

Nearly 900 alumni and guests from 40 states as well as Canada and Mexico are expected to attend this year's festivities.

For the second year in a row, members of the Lawrence 50-Year Connection, a cohort of alumni who have graduated 50 or more years ago, will unofficially open Reunion Weekend June 13 with a special series of panel presentations followed by small-group discussions. Conducted in the Warch Campus Center, the scheduled topics include “College Experiences that Mattered Later On,” “Paths Not Taken: What I Wish I Had Tried” and “Inspirational Moments.”

George B. Walter Service to Society Award

Arau will receive the George B. Walter Service to Society Award. A saxophonist who won two Downbeat Magazine awards as a student, Arau shares his love of jazz with people of all ages and abilities and inspires them to pursue their passions in music as the founder of the New York Jazz Academy. Since opening in 2009, the NYJA has grown into the largest jazz school in New York City, with locations in Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens, and Long Island and instrument instruction ranging from viola and vocals to saxophone and harp! An online option began operating last December and is now offering free music classes to students worldwide.

To support school music programs that had difficulty in acquiring new music, Arau launched The Commissioning Project, which allows multiple ensembles to jointly commission a piece of music, making it affordable for all involved.

“The hurdles have changed at each stage in life,” says Arau, who lives in Jackson Heights, N.Y. “Invariably, however, I still find myself calling upon that confidence I developed at Lawrence whenever I need a boost to meet each new challenge along the way. Now I look at the world and recognize there is no limit to our capacity.”

Lucia Russell Briggs Distinguished Achievement Award

Sara Quandt, Winston Salem, N.C., and José Luis Romero Hicks, Mexico City, will each be presented the Lucia Russell Briggs Distinguished Achievement Award.



Sara Quandt '73

Quandt, a 1973 Lawrence graduate, is a professor in the department of epidemiology and prevention at Wake Forest School of Medicine.

As an applied medical anthropologist, Quandt works to correct health disparities experienced by rural and minority populations. Her research focuses on occupational health concerns of Latino immigrant farm workers and poultry processing workers, particularly pesticide exposure and occupational injuries and illnesses. She also investigates food and nutrition issues among older rural residents. She is the co-founder of the North Carolina Field Coalition, a nonprofit organization dedicated to increase awareness of the plight of the farmworker.

“Lawrence was where I first encountered challenges to using the

Euro-centric lens for interpreting history and social relations that I pretty much took for granted,” says Quandt, who grew up in a small, all-white Midwestern town and attended school K-12 in the same building. “This dramatic change in viewpoint has shaped much of what I do today. I realize now that Lawrence provided the opportunities and support I needed to follow this path.”



Jose-Luis Romero Hicks '79

Romero Hicks, a 1979 Lawrence graduate, is an attorney and the founder and managing partner of Romero Hicks & Galindo, a legal and consulting firm based in Mexico City. His professional accomplishments range from professor of law and economics at Guanajuato State University, where he later became a member of the Board of Trustees, to president and CEO of BANCOMEXT, the Mexican Bank for Foreign Trade.

He has served under both President Carlos Salinas and President Vicente Fox, holding appointments as director general for housing policy at the Ministry for Social Development and co-chair of the National Housing Policy Committee, respectively.

A frequent national radio and television commentator in Mexico,

Romero Hicks has been recognized as one of the country's 100 best CEOs and one of the 300 most influential leaders in Mexico.

"Lawrence laid the foundations for my professional career," says Romero Hicks. "The unmatched quality of Lawrence professors has become more than evident over time. All courses seem like they were taught only a few weeks ago, although I still awake at times thinking that somehow I didn't meet a deadline on a term paper. After Lawrence one never awakes as before. Now I sleep with the satisfaction of having served my community well, thanks to a Lawrence liberal arts education."

Presidential Award

O.B. Parrish, Chicago, Ill, and Marlene Crupi Widen, Milwaukee, will receive the Presidential Award, which recognizes a graduate of Lawrence or Milwaukee-Downer whose exemplary leadership and actions have contributed to the betterment of the entire Lawrence University community.



O.B. Parrish '55

A 1955 Lawrence graduate, Parrish has been a member of the

college's Board of Trustees for 30 years, serving on the finance, investment and academic affairs committees, among others. One of Lawrence's most loyal donors, Parrish helped lay the foundation for the successful *More Light!* campaign, which raised more than \$160 million, by serving as a member of the campaign working group.

A successful entrepreneur, Parrish is president of Phoenix Health Care, a private company which invests in innovative health care opportunities, and chairman and CEO of the Female Health Company, a public company which developed the female condom. He also serves as chairman of Abiant, a private company that focuses on the early detection of and assessment of potential drugs for the treatment of Alzheimer's disease. In March 2013, the financial website the Motley Fool named the Female Health Company one of the 25 best companies in America.

"Lawrence opened an intellectual door that enabled me to see life in a broad and total perspective as opposed to one that's self centered," says Parrish. "It encouraged me to always become involved in something more important than myself. I discovered this led to a unique sense of satisfaction combining personal and professional success and societal contribution. As a result I found that life became a challenging adventure where I have seldom felt I was working. Without Lawrence this door may have remained closed."



Marlene Crupi Widen M-D '55

Widen graduated from Milwaukee-Downer in 1955. As president of the M-D alumnae association, she helped assure a smooth transition during the school's 1964 consolidation with Lawrence College and the spirit of Milwaukee-Downer and its proud traditions are ever present in Appleton because of her efforts. She has served as a class secretary for 30 years as well as a class agent and a member of the Lawrence Alumni Association Board of Directors. She has served as the co-chair of the Legacy Circle National Council, inspiring many to make planned gifts.

“Lawrence University is alive and well and so is my alma mater, Milwaukee Downer College,” says Widen. “The consolidation in 1964 provided the opportunity to meet Lawrence College alumni and become familiar with the campus and buildings. In cherishing each and every interaction with Lawrence, I realize that due to the past 49 years my Downer roots are truly embedded in my personal Lawrentian legacy today.”

Gertrude Breithaupt Jupp Outstanding Service Award

Harry Jansen Kraemer, Wilmette, Ill., and Elizabeth Kortenhof

Kumbalek, Houston, Texas, will be presented the Gertrude Breithaupt Jupp Outstanding Service Award.



Harry Jansen Kraemer '77

A 1977 Lawrence graduate, Kraemer spent 12 years on the Board of Trustees (1999-2011), including three years as board chair. While on the board, he served as co-chair of the *More Light!* campaign, the most successful fund-raising effort in the college's history, and has shared his talents with numerous other university committees. He has participated in the Lawrence Scholars in Business Program, been a Career Conference panelist and was the featured speaker for the college's 2011 matriculation convocation.

The former chief executive officer of the multibillion-dollar global health care company Baxter International, Kraemer currently is an executive partner at Madison Dearborn Partners, a private equity investment firm based in Chicago. He also is a clinical professor of management and strategy at Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Management.

"As I reflect on the first 58 years of my life, I realize that the four years I spent at Lawrence University were the most meaningful

and impactful,” says Kraemer. “I remember my very first day at Lawrence when the president stated that the goal for the next four years was to enable each student to develop the skill set to educate ourselves for the rest of our lives. The skill sets that I learned at Lawrence — the ability to critically read, write and articulate my position on a wide variety of issues — prepared me in ways no other education could have prepared me.”



Elizabeth Korten Hof Kumbalek '78

A 1978 graduate of Lawrence, Kumbalek's devotion to alma mater is legendary. For more than 20 years, she has served the college as an admissions volunteer, attending and hosting admissions receptions and representing Lawrence at numerous college fairs throughout the Houston area. She has represented her class on several reunion steering and gift committees and is a former president (2007-09) of the Lawrence University Alumni Association. She also served as a *More Light!* campaign volunteer and is currently a member of Lawrence's Parents Committee.

Kumbalek has held various positions in the petroleum business and is currently a self-employed geophysical consultant.

“To me Lawrence is family, literally and figuratively,” says Kumbalek. “I believe the values imparted by a liberal arts education link all members of the Lawrence community as extended family. My student years at Lawrence gave me great confidence in my ability to learn, and deepened my understanding of the societal responsibilities incumbent on those of us fortunate to have had such an exceptional educational opportunity. Lawrence continues to inspire me to make my best effort to continue to grow intellectually and act compassionately.”